

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2988

UNCLAS MEXICO 6390

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, MX

SUBJECT: MEXICAN PLANS FOR ANCHOVY

REF: STATE 149666; MEXICO A-425, AUGUST 24, 1973

1. SUMMARY: MEXICO HAS AN ACTIVE PROGRAM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FISH MEAL INDUSTRY BASED ON THE CALIFORNIA ANCHOVY AND INVOLVING A PERUVIAN FISHING COMPANY, FAO, AND U.S. INTERESTS. END SUMMARY.

2. FAO/MEXICAN FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT PROJECT HAS ADVISED GOM THAT THE ANCHOVY DESOURCE OFF ENSENADA IS CAPABLE OF PRODUCING 500,000 TONS OF FISH PER YEAR, CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE. IN ITS REPORT FAO SAID THAT PRESENT REDUCTION PLANT CAPACITY IS SUFFICIENT FOR AN EXPLORATORY FISHING PROGRAM, THAT ONE ADDITIONAL PLANT WOULD SUPPORT A MODERATE SIZED OPERATION AND THAT THREE ADDITIONAL PLANTS COULD HANDLE THE ESTIMATED 500,000 TONS PER YEAR.

3. MEXICO HAS CONCLUDED AGREEMENT WITH FAO FOR SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF THE ANCHOVY RESOURCE. THIS WILL FORMALLY BEGIN IN NOVEMBER AND PROVIDES FOR SIX INTERNATIONAL SCIENTISTS AND FIVE MEXICAN SCIENTISTS.

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4. GOM PRESENTLY HAS UNDER CONTRACT FROM A PERUVIAN FISHING COMPANY THREE ANCHOVY SEINERS AND AN AIRCRAFT FOR EXPLORATORY FISHING. IN ADDITION, THEY HAVE CHARTERED A SAN DIEGO SEINER, THE ASTRONAUT. ALTHOUGH THE PERUVIAN VESSELS GOT OFF TO A SLOW START DUE TO A DIFFERENCE IN THE BEHAVIOR OF THE CALIFORNIA ANCHOVY COMPARED TO THE PERUVIAN ACHOVY, THESE VESSELS AND THE ASTRONAUT ARE NOW REPORTED TO BE MAKING GOOD CATCHES.

5. ZAPATA CORP. OF HOUSTON, TEXAS, HAS PRESENTED A FORMAL PROPOSAL TO GOM FOR A JOINT VENTURE TO EXPLOIT THE ACHOVY RESOURCE. ZAPATA PROPOSAL OUTLINES A FIVE-YEAR PLAN THAT CALLS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF FIVE 500-TON VESSELS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A REDUCTION PLANT THAT WOULD BE EXPENDED EACH YEAR CONCURRENT WITH THE COMPLETION OF A NEW VESSEL TO A TOTAL CAPACITY OF 400,000 TONS OF FISH A YEAR. IT IS NOT STATED WHERE THE VESSELS WOULD BE BUILT. THIS PLAN IF ACCEPTED WOULD GIVE ONE COMPANY WITH U.S. PARTICIPATION A VIRTUAL MONOPOLY ON THE MEXICAN FISH MEAL BUSINESS AND IT IS NOT CERTAIN THAT GOM WILL GO FOR IT. ZAPATA ALREADY HAS ONE MAN (NAME UNKNOWN) WHO IS SAID TO BE A VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE CORPORATION IN PERMANENT RESIDENCE IN ENSENADA. THE NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE MENHADEN PROGRAM AT BEAUFORT, N.C. HAS PEOPLE WHO ARE IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH OFFICIALS OF ZAPATA AND WHO COULD POSSIBLE PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION.

6. PRESENT MEXICAN ANCHOVY FLEET PRACTICALLY NONEXISTENT FIVE OR SIX SMAL AND DECREPIT BOATS. THERE ARE ABOUT 25 SARDINE SEINERS THAT COULD ALSO BE USED FOR ANCHOVY AND THE RECENT IDB FISHERIES LOAN PROVIDES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF 30 ADDITIONAL SARDINE SEINERS THAT COULD POTENTIALLY ENGAGE IN THE ANCHOVY FISHERY.  
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